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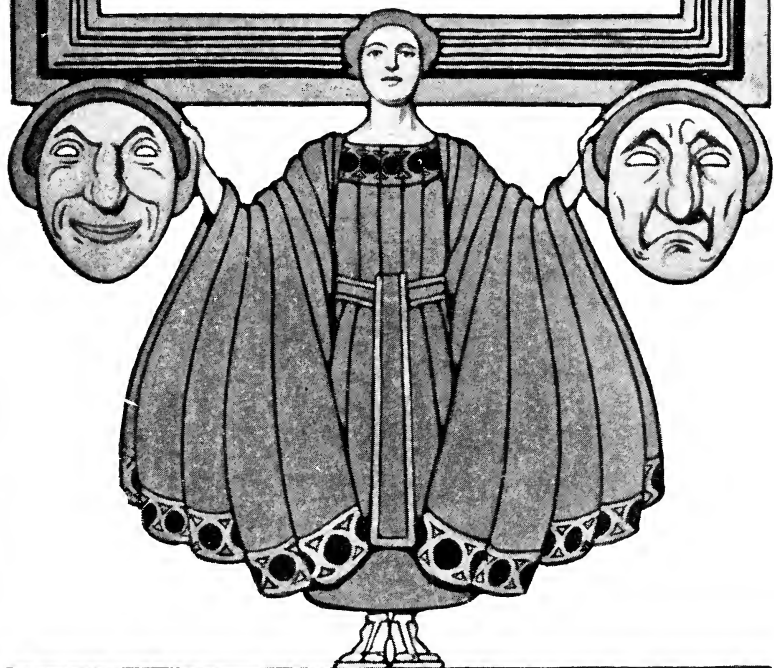
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JERRY'S JOB

Raymond M. Robinson



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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

JERRY'S JOB

A Play for Boys in One Act

By
RAYMOND M. ROBINSON



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1917

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Jerry's Job

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Jerry's Job

CHARACTERS

MR. MORTON	.	.		<i>head of the Intercolonial Construction Company</i>
MR. HAMILTON	.	.	.	<i>his partner</i>
JENKINS	.	.	.	<i>a draughtsman</i>
TOMMY	.	.	.	<i>an office boy, but a poor one</i>
JERRY	.	.	.	<i>a Boy Scout who needs a job</i>

TIME.—Thirty minutes.

STORY OF THE PLAY

Tommy, the office boy of the Intercolonial Construction Company, is careless. Jerry West, a Boy Scout, calls and asks for a job. Tom is caught lying and is discharged; Jerry, taking his place, is left in charge of the office. While Jerry answers the telephone, Tom takes vengeance by spilling ink on a drawing and breaking the glass on a picture. Jerry is accused and fired. He comes back to get his cap and meets Tommy, who is making his escape. "It was you. You've got ink on your hands now!" Tommy hits Jerry, who knocks him down and he cuts his hand on the broken glass. Jerry, familiar with "First Aid," binds it up and Tommy, overcome by Jerry's straightness, confesses. "I guess I ain't got anything against you. I busted that picture." "Where'd you learn the Red Cross stuff?" "It's a part of the Boy Scout training. They teach you lots of things,—First Aid and athletics and wireless and—and how to live right,—straight, I mean." Jerry helps Tommy join the Scouts; he keeps his job and Tom is promised a job, too, if he makes good.

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UPS

MORTON. A tall man of about fifty, rather dignified in appearance. Gray wig (or the hair may be powdered), and a short gray moustache. Dark business suit.

HAMILTON. Tall, about thirty-five. Business suit.

JENKINS. About twenty-one or two. Somewhat sporty in appearance. Light-colored suit of the sort that clothiers advertise as the latest cut for young men. He wears a shirt of rather conspicuous design and a brilliant tie. When he first appears he has no coat on, and his shirt sleeves are rolled up to the elbows. He wears tortoise-shell spectacles because he thinks they are "stylish."

TOMMY. A small boy of about fifteen. Red-headed, if possible. He wears knickerbockers. His clothes are worn and not particularly neat and his boots are dirty. Cap.

JERRY. About TOMMY's age and size. His clothes are old and show wear, but are clean. His hair is well brushed, in contrast to TOMMY's ruffled head, and he gives the impression that he tries to appear as neat as possible. He wears knickerbockers, and carries a cap.

PROPERTIES

This list is intended to cover only "hand properties," that is, small articles used in the action of the play. It does not include furniture, etc., which is described elsewhere.

A large drawing—the plan of a building—fastened to the table with thumb-tacks at the beginning of the play.

A book on the desk.

HAMILTON carries a watch.

A pencil on the table; a pencil and a few sheets of note paper on the desk; JENKINS has a pencil in his coat pocket—this should be a new one, long enough to be used in tightening the bandage on TOMMY's wrist.

A small package in TOMMY's pocket. His pockets are stuffed with numerous other articles: scraps of paper, tobacco coupons, elastic bands, stubby pencils, erasers, one shabby glove, a dirty handkerchief, the remains of a cake of milk chocolate which is shedding its skin of tin-foil, etc.

A picture, about twelve inches long, framed and with a glass. When first brought on by JENKINS the picture is neatly done up in wrapping paper and tied with a cord.

A dust-cloth for JERRY. This should be placed just outside the door, R.

A telephone bell outside the door, L.

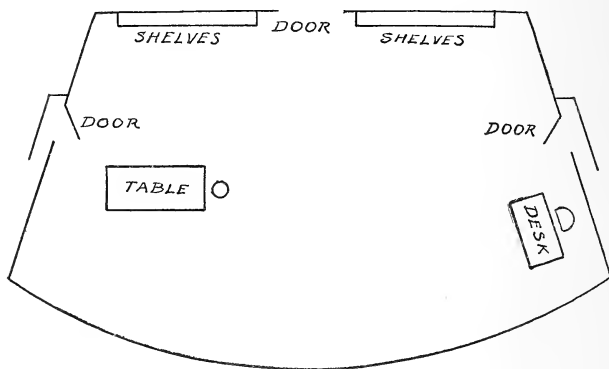
A slip of paper for JERRY, on which he is supposed to write the telephone messages.

A drawing about two feet square, in the center of which is a large ink stain. This drawing should be on tracing cloth such as is used by architects and engineers, if possible. If this cloth is not available, white paper may be used.

A handkerchief for MORTON. In the handkerchief is concealed a small bottle—a two-ounce vial is sufficient—containing beef juice to suggest blood from TOMMY'S wound.

SCENE PLOT

INTERIOR BACKING



SCENE.—The office of the Intercolonial Construction Company. A typical room in a modern office building. The public entrance to the office is a door up c. At L. is a door opening into Mr. Morton's private office. At R. is a door to the draughting room. Along the back wall, on either side of the entrance, are rows of shelves filled with books, pamphlets and catalogues. Below the shelves are cupboards or little alcoves containing rolls of drawings and blue-prints, samples of brick and stone, wood finish, odd pieces of hardware, plumbing and lighting fixtures, etc. These things are not essential to the action of the play, how-

ever, and may be omitted if the stage manager finds it difficult to obtain them. They are only intended to "dress" the stage and to give it the appearance of the headquarters of a large building concern. Down R. is a large table on which is fastened the plan of a building, a drawing about the size of a newspaper page. The table may be of plain, unpolished wood, or it may be simply a big drawing board, supported by a pair of wooden horses. There are stools each side of it. Down L. is a flat-topped desk, littered with papers and writing materials, also a book. Chair behind the desk. A typewriter on the desk will add to the businesslike appearance of the room, but is not necessary. On the walls are pictures suggesting the nature of the business—drawings or photographs of office buildings, factories, bridges, etc.

Jerry's Job

SCENE.—*Office of the Intercolonial Company. At rise of curtain HAMILTON is seated on stool at table, R. C. MORTON is standing at his side. They are examining the drawing.*

MORTON. H'm—pretty good. Is this drawing completed, Hamilton?

HAMILTON. Practically. There are two or three notes to be added.

MORTON. I'd like to send the heating contractor a blue-print of it to-day.

HAMILTON. An hour's work will finish it.

MORTON. By the way—who made this drawing?

HAMILTON. Jenkins.

MORTON. Tell him that he will be of more value to us when he learns to spell. Foundation is not spelled with a *w*. Chimney is not spelled *c-h-i-m-n-y*. And laboratory can get along with one *r*.

HAMILTON. The boy knows better than that. He is careless.

MORTON. Exactly—he is careless. How much education has he had?

HAMILTON. High school graduate—two years in college.

MORTON. There you are. The average boy or girl enters school at the age of six, spends anywhere from eight to eighteen years getting educated and then, after all that, can neither read, speak nor write the English language.

HAMILTON. Oh, you're a little severe on the youngsters.

MORTON. No, I'm not. Here's a boy who has probably been going to school for fifteen years spell-

ing chimney c-h-i-m-n-y. The same boy only yesterday told me that he had received a set of blue-prints from the art-shi-teck's office.

HAMILTON (*laughing*). I'll bet he told you they showed the location of certain col-yumes.

MORTON. Right you are. He's like most of our school graduates. We teach them a little French, a little German, a little mathematics, a little music. They recognize the air "America," but can't repeat the first verse from memory. They read Shakespeare in school but prefer the movies for entertainment. They are told that Raphael painted the Sistine Madonna or something of the sort, but are far more interested in the so-called comic supplement of the Sunday newspaper. And they almost invariably pronounce a final i-n-g without the g.

HAMILTON (*laughing*). I guess that's so. And you might mention handwriting.

MORTON. I might mention many things that I haven't. Just see that this drawing is in proper condition before it leaves the office and send a print to O'Connell and Company.

HAMILTON. I will.

(MORTON *starts for his private office, L. At the door he turns.*)

MORTON. Where is Tommy?

HAMILTON. Tommy went to the post-office.

MORTON. Anywhere else?

HAMILTON. No.

MORTON. He has been gone a long time.

HAMILTON (*looking at his watch*). Nearly an hour.

(MORTON *comes back a few steps toward the center of the stage.*)

MORTON. An hour for a fifteen-minute errand! Hamilton, what are we going to do with that boy? He's utterly useless to me. He's not interested in his work, he makes no attempt to keep things in order, he disobeys instructions, he pays no attention to what I tell him.

(HAMILTON *swings around on stool to face* MORTON.)

HAMILTON. I know what I'd do.

MORTON. You would ——

HAMILTON. Can him.

MORTON. Send him to me when he comes back. I'm going to give him a lecture. If that has no effect we'll look for another boy.

(MORTON *turns back* L. HAMILTON *starts for the draughting room door*, R. *As each is about to go out, the door at the back of the stage is flung open and TOMMY enters. Both men turn about and face him. TOMMY wears a cap over one ear and keeps it there during the early part of the following scene. Seeing MORTON eyeing him sternly he starts at once on a voluble monologue, as if to anticipate questions.*)

TOMMY. Gee, there was a mob in the square in front of the ——

MORTON. Where have you been?

TOMMY. Post-office.

MORTON. Does it take you an hour to walk two blocks to the post-office and back?

TOMMY. No, of course not, but you see I went to the post-office, an' I was comin' back in a hurry, an' I put on so much speed I guess I kind o' lost control o' the steerin' gear, an' first thing I knew I butted up against an old duck in a silk kelley in the crowd an' like to knocked the wind out of him, an'—an' he grabbed me an' a cop come along, an' I ducked an' run, an'—an'—well, I couldn't come straight here wit' a cop after me, could I? So I beats it down Water Street an' the cop chasin' along behind, an' into Congress Street, an' from Congress to State, an' down State to Merchants' Row ——

MORTON (*solemnly*). H'm, yes. That will do.

TOMMY. Yes, an' ——

MORTON. Your story is highly interesting ——

(TOMMY *suddenly recollects another item.*)

TOMMY. Oh, yes, an' when I got to South Market Street I cut through the Market, an' there was a whale of a big turkey hangin' on a hook by the door, an' when I was goin' through the blamed thing fell off the hook an'——

(He is telling the story with intense earnestness. His imagination works rapidly and he is expert in the use of it. MORTON retains a severe expression, his eye constantly on the boy's face. HAMILTON, greatly amused, turns away to conceal his desire to laugh. MORTON raises a finger warningly.)

MORTON. Just a moment—just a moment, Tommy. You understand, of course, that I don't question the truth of your story. I merely want to remind you that you spend three times as much time as necessary on errands. You are careless. You pay no attention to my directions. You show no interest in your work. You're worse than useless.

TOMMY *(interrupting)*. Hey, lookut! I said——

MORTON *(sharply)*. That's enough! I'll do the talking now. There's a good chance in this office for a bright, energetic boy to work his way to success, but if you keep on the way you're going now, in a mighty short time you'll be looking for another job. Do you understand? *(TOMMY pulls off his cap and studies the button on it intently. He offers no answer.)* Do you hear me?

TOMMY. I get you.

MORTON. Very well.

TOMMY. But say—if I——

MORTON. No reply or comment is necessary. Now I have two errands for you to do, and I want you back here by twelve o'clock. *(He indicates the book on the desk, down L.)* Take that book to Mr. Rhoades, whose office is in the Tremont Building, and tell him that I thank him for the use of it. Get that?

TOMMY. Sure.

MORTON. Then, on the way back, stop at Wilson and Black's store and get a package that will be ready for me.

TOMMY. That all?

MORTON. That's all. See if you can remember that much.

(MORTON goes into private office, L., closing the door after him. HAMILTON goes out through the opposite door, R. TOMMY loiters about the room a while, looking idly at things. Finally he wanders over to the left side of the stage, pauses in front of the closed door to MORTON'S office, makes up a hideous face of derision, pulls his cap down on one ear, and goes out the door, C.—without the book. HAMILTON enters, R. He goes to the table, down R., seats himself on the stool and studies the drawing which he was discussing with MORTON at the beginning of the play. For a short time he works in silence, occasionally making notes on the sheet with a pencil. Finally he turns to the open door, R., and calls to a draughtsman outside.)

HAMILTON. Jenkins!

(Enter JENKINS, R.)

JENKINS. Did you call me?

HAMILTON. Fix up this plan and have two prints made of it—one for the office and send one to O'Connell. First of all correct the spelling of the words I have marked. You'll find it easier to spell correctly the first time than to rub out mistakes. Also put on these dimensions. (*He indicates with his pencil.*)

JENKINS. What's the title of the drawing?

HAMILTON. Power house for the National Clock Company, Boston, Massachusetts. Intercolonial Construction Company, Construction Engineers, and so forth, and the date.

(JENKINS removes the thumb-tacks with which the drawing is fastened to the table. Enter MORTON, L. He sees the book on the desk.)

MORTON. Where is Tommy?

HAMILTON. You sent him out, didn't you?

MORTON. Yes, but here is the book he was to take.

HAMILTON. Apparently he has gone without it.

(MORTON shows displeasure.)

MORTON. Confound that boy! After all I said to him! He is the worst specimen of an office boy I ever saw! (*He speaks to JENKINS.*) See if he's in the corridor.

(*Exit JENKINS at door c.*)

HAMILTON. I don't think the kid pays the slightest attention to what you tell him.

MORTON. I don't want to fire him, but what can I do?

HAMILTON. A piece of seven-eighths board applied in the right place might command his attention for a while.

(*Enter JENKINS, c.*)

JENKINS. No sign of him.

MORTON. Then, Jenkins, you'll have to do this errand for me. Get your hat and coat.

(*Exit JENKINS, r.*)

HAMILTON. I'll finish this drawing myself and send it out. (*He rolls up the drawing and goes toward the door, r.* MORTON picks up the book from the desk and stands near his office door, l., turning the pages impatiently. The door at the back is pushed open and JERRY enters, cap in hand. Both men turn and face him. The positions are similar to those at TOMMY'S first entrance. JERRY closes the door quietly and waits for some one to speak to him.) What can I do for you?

JERRY. I'd like to speak to Mr. Morton.

(HAMILTON makes a motion toward MORTON.)

MORTON. Just a moment, my boy. (*Enter JENKINS, r., having put on his coat. He has his hat in his hand. MORTON hands him the book.*) You know where Mr. Rhoades's office is?

JENKINS. Yes, sir.

MORTON. Please return this book to him with my thanks for the use of it. He's leaving town this afternoon, and I want him to have it before he goes. (*JENKINS takes the book and goes out door at back exit. HAMILTON goes R. into the draughting room with the drawing. MORTON turns his attention to JERRY.*) Well?

JERRY. I came to see if you wanted to hire me, sir.

MORTON. H'm....As an expert on steel or as a superintendent of construction?

JERRY. I'm afraid I couldn't do either—yet.

MORTON. Yet—that signifies hope, at least.

JERRY. Yes, sir. I could learn. But I could do errands and office work, and I think I could trace plans.

MORTON. I don't believe I can offer you anything at present. You see, we have one office boy.

JERRY. And you don't want another?

MORTON. Heaven forbid!

JERRY (*uncomprehending*). What, sir?

MORTON. I couldn't keep track of two. My nerves aren't equal to the task. Have you ever worked before?

JERRY. I've been going to school until two weeks ago. I had to leave. I didn't want to, and my mother kept me in school as long as she could, but—I guess I've got to go to work now and earn some money. She needs my help.

(*MORTON sits in chair near desk, L.*)

MORTON. And the past two weeks—have you been working?

JERRY (*coming down c.*). I worked in a department store for a week, but they fired me because they thought I broke a glass bowl, but I didn't. Another boy broke it—I saw him.

MORTON. And they wouldn't believe you when you told them he did it?

JERRY. I didn't tell them who did it. I just said that I didn't.

MORTON. Why didn't you tell?

JERRY. I'm not a tattle-tale.

(This straightforward declaration pleases MORTON and also amuses him.)

MORTON. And you've been looking for work ever since?

JERRY. Yes, sir; it's hard to find. I have done a little work for the Scout headquarters, but that's only until I can find something better.

MORTON. The Scout headquarters?

(He is puzzled.)

JERRY. The Boy Scouts of America. I'm a Scout.

MORTON. Oh—er—yes....H'm....*(He pauses a moment, thinking. Then he turns again to the boy.)* I may need a boy before long. If you'll give me your name and address I'll send for you if I want you. *(He gives JERRY a sheet of paper and a pencil which he takes from the desk. JERRY takes them to the table, R., and writes, offering MORTON the paper when he has finished. MORTON reads what he has written.)* Jerry West, 26 Factory Street.

JERRY. If you should want me right off you could reach me by telephone at the Scout headquarters. This is the number. *(He writes the telephone number on the paper.)* I could get here in five minutes.

MORTON *(amused)*. Very well.

JERRY. Thank you, sir.

(Exit JERRY, c., cap in hand. As he opens the door TOMMY is seen outside. He eyes JERRY suspiciously as the latter disappears, then he comes in. He offers MORTON a small package which he fishes from his pocket along with numerous other things—scraps of paper, tobacco coupons, elastic bands, pencils, erasers, one shabby glove, a dirty handkerchief and the remains of a cake of milk chocolate. Most of these articles fall to the floor.)

TOMMY. Here's your package from Wilson's.

(Having given it to MORTON, he stoops to gather up his possessions.)

MORTON. Did you see Mr. Rhoades?

(Without rising, TOMMY pauses in his work long enough to look at the desk. He sees that the book is not there.)

TOMMY. N-no—no, sir.

MORTON. No?

TOMMY. No—he—he —— (He hesitates, then, as if making up his mind to lie out of his predicament if possible, he answers while stuffing the last of the debris into his pockets.) He wasn't in. His stenographer was there.

MORTON. But you left the book?

TOMMY. Yes.

(He rises. MORTON watches the boy sharply a moment, but TOMMY'S gaze in return is apparently undisturbed.)

MORTON. Tommy, you're lying to me. You went off without the book, and I had to send Jenkins with it.

TOMMY. Yes, but I remembered it when I got down to the street, and came back for it and met Jenkins at the door and took it an'——

MORTON. Then where's Jenkins?

TOMMY. Gone to lunch, I suppose.

MORTON. Going to lunch early to-day, isn't he? (He turns back to the desk.) That's all.

(TOMMY goes out, R. He is troubled. He wonders whether his lie is going to serve its purpose. He is hardly gone when JENKINS enters, C., with a package which he places on the desk.)

JENKINS. Mr. Rhoades asked me to give you this package. He is going south this afternoon for the winter and wanted you to have it before he left. He said he intended to see you personally, but probably won't have a chance.

MORTON. Thank you. Did you see Tommy?

JENKINS. No.

(JENKINS *pauses a moment as if expecting further questioning, but* MORTON *turns his attention to the package, which he proceeds to open. Exit* JENKINS, R. *Enter* HAMILTON, R. *He comes down c.*)

MORTON (*down L.*). I think it's about time we sent Tommy on his way.

HAMILTON. What now?

MORTON. He came back and told me that he had met Jenkins outside, took the book from him and delivered it himself. It seems that he was lying. (*Vehemently.*) I won't have that sort of a boy around! (*TOMMY appears at the door, R., as if to enter, but draws back out of sight when he discovers that they are talking about him.*) I wish I had hired the lad who was here asking for a job.

HAMILTON. He looked intelligent.

MORTON. Yes. I was favorably impressed.

HAMILTON. Why don't you hire him?

MORTON (*decisively*). I'm going to. (*He finds the paper on which is written JERRY'S name and gives it to* HAMILTON.) Call up that number and have him come over here. I'll attend to Thomas.

(*Exit* HAMILTON, L. MORTON *removes the wrappers from his package and discovers a photograph, covered with glass and set in an attractive frame. The picture, which need not be large, is a view in a mountainous country. MORTON, thrusting the papers aside, examines his gift intently and with evident admiration. Enter* HAMILTON, L. *He comes down c. MORTON shows it to him. HAMILTON shows interest.*)

HAMILTON. Hello—that's a peach. Where did it come from?

MORTON (*down L.*). Rhoades. Isn't that good?

HAMILTON. It's a corker.

MORTON. My favorite spot in the mountains. See the little lake through the trees?

HAMILTON. Yes, it's a beautiful thing.

MORTON. Mighty good of Charley Rhoades to send it to me, I think. I must hang it in my office.

(He lays the picture on the desk, L. HAMILTON hands back the paper with JERRY'S name on it.)

HAMILTON. I called up the young man, and he is on his way.

MORTON. Then the die is cast. Well, he can't be worse than the present incumbent.

HAMILTON. The present encumbrance.

MORTON. I accept the correction. Encumbrance is nearer the truth. Send Tommy to me.

(Exit HAMILTON, R. MORTON walks slowly toward the door, L. As he reaches it TOMMY enters, R., and stops near the door, half scared, half defiant. MORTON turns.)

TOMMY. Did—did you want me, Mr. Morton?

MORTON. Yes. Thomas, I have given you warning. What I have said hasn't done the least good. You have just lied to me in regard to the errand to Mr. Rhoades's office. I will not have a liar in my employ. I'm not going to waste any more words on you. You're through. Mr. Hamilton will pay you your salary for the week. That's all.

TOMMY. Then I'm fired, am I? *(Comes c.)*

MORTON. Quite right. You're fired.

TOMMY. All right, but I'm goin' to say this —

MORTON. I don't care to hear any more from you.

(About to exit, L.)

TOMMY. I know you don't, but just the same —

MORTON *(sharply)*. That's enough! Get your money and leave!

TOMMY *(angrily)*. I don't want your money!

MORTON. Then leave without it.

TOMMY. I'm glad enough to leave! But just be-

cause you want to make room for a little pie-faced mollycoddle of a —

(MORTON, *thoroughly angry, takes a quick step toward TOMMY. TOMMY dodges out the door, c., slamming the door after him. MORTON'S face shows his displeasure. He turns sharply and goes into his office, L., closing the door after him. HAMILTON and JENKINS enter, R., the latter with the drawing which was on the table at the beginning of the play.*)

HAMILTON. All ready to go out?

JENKINS. Yes.

(HAMILTON *spreads the sheet on the table, down R., and studies it a moment.*)

HAMILTON. You corrected the spelling of these words?

JENKINS. Yes.

HAMILTON. Be careful of that sort of thing. Mr. Morton is particular, you know.

JENKINS (*lightly*). I never could spell.

HAMILTON (*dryly*). So I have noticed. All right; have two blue-prints made.

(*He goes to desk, L. JENKINS rolls up the drawing.*)

JENKINS. Tommy got the can?

HAMILTON. Yes. (*Sits at desk.*)

JENKINS. I thought it was coming when you told him the boss wanted to see him.

HAMILTON. He deserved it.

JENKINS. He expected it. He told me he thought he was being fired to make room for some other kid. Swore he'd get even, so you'd better watch out.

HAMILTON. Do you think he'll try to wreck the business, or merely follow one of us home some dark night and sandbag us?

JENKINS (*laughing*). Can't say. You may find a bomb in the waste basket some morning.

HAMILTON. That's a bad guess. It would mean some work—and Tommy and work are strangers.

JENKINS. You never can tell.

(Exit JENKINS, R. Enter JERRY, C. He pulls off his cap.)

JERRY (*eagerly*). Do you want me to go to work?

(HAMILTON *smiles at his eagerness. He rises and goes to door L., knocks, then pushes the door open. He pronounces the boy's name with mock gravity, in the manner of a solemn English butler.*)

HAMILTON. Mr. Jerry West. (To JERRY.) Walk in, young man.

(Exit JERRY, L. HAMILTON *walks to the desk. JENKINS enters, R., with his hat on. He is still carrying the drawing.*)

JENKINS. I'm going down street with this. White and Glover are both out.

HAMILTON. No one in the draughting room?

JENKINS. No. But I'll be back soon.

HAMILTON. Mr. M. doesn't like to have the place deserted.

JENKINS (*hesitating*). Well —

HAMILTON. Go ahead. I'll stay until somebody comes back.

JENKINS. Thanks awfully.

(Exit JENKINS, C. HAMILTON *crosses to door R., then, as if changing his mind, recrosses the stage and enters MORTON'S office. A pause of a few seconds. Then the door, C., is pushed open part way, slowly and quietly, and TOMMY peers in. He looks around cautiously, then disappears and closes the door as MORTON, HAMILTON and JERRY emerge from the office, L.*)

MORTON. Jerry, I'm going to give you the responsibility of running the office for a while. Mr. Hamilton and I are going to another office in this building for

about five minutes. If the telephone rings take the message.

JERRY. Yes, sir.

MORTON. Don't leave the office. By the way, you'll find a dust-rag in the draughting room behind the door. (*Points R.*) You might clean off some of the books.

JERRY. Yes, sir.

(*Exit JERRY, R. MORTON glances at the framed photograph on the desk. He picks it up.*)

MORTON. The more I look at that thing the more I like it.

HAMILTON. It's certainly a corker.

(*MORTON replaces the picture on the desk and the two men go out, C. JERRY returns with the dust-cloth and for a few moments busies himself cleaning the furniture and books on the shelves up R. and L. The telephone in MORTON'S private office rings. JERRY enters the office, L. The door, C., is pushed open again, and TOMMY comes in quietly. His manner of looking about furtively and of walking softly and noiselessly gives the impression that he is bent on mischief. He goes to the draughting room door, R., and assures himself that there is no one in that room. He crosses L. and looks through the door into MORTON'S office. For a moment he watches the boy within, then recrosses R., as if searching for something. He disappears through door R. JERRY reënters, L., and proceeds with his dusting. For a while he works diligently, then the telephone rings again and he again enters the private office. TOMMY comes out of the draughting room, hurriedly. He is trying to wipe ink stains from his fingers. He appears to be a little frightened. He goes quickly to door C., then, as if struck with a new idea, he runs to the desk, down L., seizes the framed picture, comes down R. in front of table, places it on the floor, glass up, and digs his heel into it viciously, smashing the glass. Then, in great haste to escape, he dashes to*

door c., but halts as MORTON'S voice is heard outside. He retreats in confusion as the door is opened and leaps back into the draughting room, R., out of sight. MORTON and HAMILTON enter, c.)

MORTON. Well, that's settled. Very convenient, having your lawyer in the same building.

HAMILTON. It saves time.

(JERRY enters from the private office, L. He has a slip of paper in his hand.)

JERRY. Two telephone messages. Mr. Jackson will call again in half an hour, and Mr. Polar Bear will be here at three o'clock.

MORTON (*in astonishment*). Polar bear!

JERRY. It sounded like that. He repeated it, but I couldn't hear him very well.

MORTON (*to HAMILTON*). Have we any polar bears on our calling list?

HAMILTON. Doesn't he mean Paul R. Thayer?

MORTON. Oh, Paul R. Thayer!

JERRY. Yes, sir. I guess that's it.

MORTON. All right. Let him come. Has any one been here while we were out?

JERRY. No, sir; nobody at all.

(MORTON, still amused and repeating the words "polar bear" to himself, exits L. Exit HAMILTON, R. JERRY resumes his dusting up L., taking down books and papers and cleaning them carefully. Suddenly HAMILTON comes in, greatly agitated. He bears a large drawing, in the center of which is a large splash of black ink.)

HAMILTON. How did that happen?

JERRY (*in surprise*). I don't know. (*Comes c.*)

HAMILTON (R.). You don't know! That's strange.

(MORTON comes from office, L.)

MORTON (L.). Why, what's that?

HAMILTON. Front elevation of the Manufacturers' Building; nearly completed and probably ruined.

MORTON. Who did that?

HAMILTON. That's what I want to know.

MORTON (to JERRY). Do you know anything about it?

JERRY (C.). No, sir. I haven't been in that room except to get the dust-cloth right there behind the door.

MORTON. Then it must have been done before the boys went out. (*Comes down L.*)

HAMILTON. It has been done very recently. The ink had hardly begun to sink in when I found it. You can see for yourself that the edges aren't dry.

(*Crosses L.*)

(*The two men examine the sheet carefully. MORTON turns to JERRY and looks at him a moment before speaking. The expression of his face indicates his suspicion. JERRY comes down R.*)

MORTON. You are sure that no one has been in the draughting room while we were out?

JERRY. Yes, sir. I was right here all the time except when I answered the telephone.

MORTON. Very strange. (*He crosses R. in front of table. His foot touches the broken glass. He looks down, and with a cry of astonishment picks up the picture, from which falls a shower of glass. Moves to C. with picture.*) Why, what in the world — (*To JERRY.*) Perhaps you can explain this. (*JERRY shakes his head nervously.*) Can't you speak?

JERRY (*down R.*). I don't know anything about it, sir.

MORTON (C.). Nonsense! Don't tell me that!

JERRY. I don't know anything about it, sir.

MORTON. Don't say that again! That picture was on the desk when I went out ten minutes ago. Now I find it smashed on the floor. You have been here alone. What am I to infer from that?

JERRY. It looks as if I did it, but, honest, I didn't.

MORTON. I have fired one boy to-day for lying to me.

JERRY. But I'm not lying.

(MORTON *turns away, up L., out of patience.* JENKINS *enters breezily, C.*)

JENKINS. The heating contractor says — (*He catches sight of the ruined drawing.*) Hello!

HAMILTON. Have you any idea who is responsible for this?

JENKINS. I? No. It's happened since I went out.

MORTON. You're sure of that? (*Comes down L. C.*)

JENKINS. Absolutely. I stopped to look at the drawing as I left the room.

HAMILTON. And there was no one else in the draughting room?

JENKINS. Not a soul.

MORTON (*to JERRY*). Then, young man, if no one else has been here you did these things yourself, and you're lying to me!

JERRY. I am not lying!

MORTON. Look here! If you had done these things by accident and had told me of them I could have overlooked them, but to have done this damage—and there has been nobody else to do it—and then to have tried to lie out of it—I've got no further use for you!

JERRY. Mr. Morton, I tell you —

MORTON. Don't you lie to me again! Get out!

JERRY. But won't you please —

MORTON. I told you to get out! I mean it.

(MORTON *turns away in anger and enters his office, L.* HAMILTON *follows him, closing the door, L.* JENKINS *starts for draughting room, R.* HAMILTON *opens the door, L., and calls.*)

HAMILTON. Jenkins!

JENKINS. Yes, sir.

(HAMILTON *withdraws into the office, L.* JENKINS *crosses L., and exits. The door is closed.* JERRY, *downcast, walks dejectedly to door C., opens it as if to go out, then, remembering that he has left his hat, closes the door and walks to the left side of the stage. At this moment TOMMY dashes out from the*

draughting room, evidently thinking that JERRY has departed. JERRY wheels about. The boys face each other in surprise.)

JERRY (L.). Who —

TOMMY (R.). Shut up! You're the guy that did me out of a job. A lot of good it did you, too.

JERRY. It was you who —

TOMMY. No, it wasn't, see! If you open your head I'll knock your block off!

JERRY. No, you won't! You poured that ink —

TOMMY. I didn't! Keep still!

JERRY. I won't keep still. You've got ink on your hands right now.

TOMMY (*frantically*). Shut up!

(TOMMY dashes toward door c. in an attempt to escape from the office. JERRY leaps in front of the door to cut off his escape. TOMMY strikes at him furiously. They come down R. There is a brief, sharp struggle, and TOMMY falls back, losing his balance and crashing to the floor among the pieces of glass, down R. The fall stuns him, and for a moment he lies motionless. JERRY takes a step toward him, a little frightened, then runs to MORTON'S door, L., and raps.)

JERRY. Mr. Morton!

(Enter HAMILTON, L.)

HAMILTON. Well, what do you want? (*He catches sight of TOMMY.*) What's this? (MORTON and JENKINS enter, L.) Where did he come from, and what's the matter with him?

JERRY (*up c.*). Just as you went in there he came running out of that door (*pointing R.*) and I tried to keep him from going out and—and he hit at me and fell —

(MORTON crosses R. to TOMMY.)

MORTON. Get up. (TOMMY moves a little and says something unintelligible, but does not rise. MORTON pokes him with his foot.) Come—get up.

TOMMY. My wrist's cut. I can't.

(JENKINS, *who has come down R., back of TOMMY, suddenly stoops.*)

JENKINS. He's bleeding.

(HAMILTON *crosses R. and kneels beside the boy.*)

HAMILTON. He's cut his wrist.

JENKINS. On the glass.

HAMILTON. Why, he's bleeding badly!

JERRY (*pushing forward*). Let me see.

MORTON (*pushing him aside*). Stand back.

HAMILTON. Get a bandage.

MORTON. Here, let me do it.

(*He tries to bandage the wrist with his handkerchief, but does it badly. The blood on TOMMY's wrist and on the bandage may be poured from a small bottle of beef juice concealed in MORTON's handkerchief.*)

HAMILTON. Fasten it this way —

MORTON. No, no—that won't stop it.

(*They struggle frantically to stop the flow of blood. JERRY is circling about them nervously.*)

HAMILTON. There, that's right —

MORTON. Tie that.

(*Having wound the bandage about the wounded wrist they attempt to tie it fast.*)

HAMILTON. The blamed thing won't stay tied! For heaven's sake send for a doctor.

(JERRY, *who has been growing more and more impatient, suddenly shoves JENKINS aside and drops on his knees at TOMMY's side. He pulls up the arm.*)

JERRY (*to HAMILTON, authoritatively*). Hold his arm there. (HAMILTON *holds the boy's arm firmly.* JERRY *unknots the bandage and rebinds it above the wrist.*) Get me a long pencil, somebody. (JENKINS *produces a pencil.* JERRY *forms a tourniquet, tightening it by means of the pencil and fastening the pencil*

so it cannot become loosened. Then he bandages the cut.) There, that will hold all right until he can get it dressed.

(They help TOMMY onto his feet.)

HAMILTON. How do you feel?

TOMMY. All right.

(He says it tremulously, but still with a trace of the characteristic bravado in his voice. He is rapidly recovering his self-possession, but he is somewhat weak and "wobbly.")

MORTON. You'd better go to a doctor's office. I'll send for a taxicab.

TOMMY (C.). I don't want no taxi. I'm goin' home.

(In addition to his unsteadiness, due to the accident, he seems to be awkward and ill at ease. He makes his way toward the hall door.)

MORTON (down L.). Don't you go home or anywhere else until you have had that wound properly dressed.

TOMMY. Aw—I ain't hurt much.

MORTON. You came mighty near being badly hurt. You have a cut on your wrist that may prove serious if you don't have it attended to at once.

TOMMY. It don't hurt.

JENKINS (down R.). Gosh! I should think it would!

TOMMY. Not—not much. (It does pain him, but he tries not to show his discomfort.) I—I'll take a walk down to the Relief Hospital and have it fixed up. One of the ambulance drivers is a friend of mine.

HAMILTON. You'd better ride.

(Goes up C. to TOMMY.)

TOMMY. I will not. I'll walk. It ain't far.

JENKINS. I guess I'd better go with him.

JERRY (R.). No, I'll go.

(*He steps to TOMMY's side. TOMMY turns against him fiercely.*)

TOMMY. No, you won't. I don't want no help from you.

MORTON. Look here, young man, do you know that you may owe your life to this boy?

TOMMY. I owe the loss of me job to him.

MORTON. You get that idea out of your mind at once. This fellow had nothing whatever to do with the loss of your job. You know perfectly well why you were fired. I gave you warning before I ever saw Jerry.

TOMMY. Well, if it hadn't been for him —

MORTON. If it hadn't been for him we would have run the office without an office boy until we found another. If it hadn't been for him you might have bled to death there on the floor while the rest of us were trying to tie up your wrist. Instead of this hostility it would be better to thank him for saving your life.

(*TOMMY is beginning to realize how things really stand. He looks at JERRY a moment without speaking, somewhat embarrassed. Then his gaze shifts to the other faces questioningly.*)

JENKINS. That's right, Tommy. You owe it to him.

(*TOMMY looks at JERRY again.*)

TOMMY. Is that right, kid?

JERRY. Oh, I just tied it up.

TOMMY. Straight goods, didn't you try to do me out of me job?

JERRY. No. I wouldn't have come here if I'd thought I was going to take your job away from you.

TOMMY. Aw—I—I dunno —

JENKINS. Be a sport, Tom.

TOMMY (*to JERRY*). I guess I ain't got anything against you. I—aw, say, I busted that picture.

MORTON (L.). Oh, you did!

TOMMY. Sure. I own up to it. I thought I had it in for him, so I sneaked in when he was at the telephone an' smashed it. I did it to get even. I thought he'd get the blame for it. Then youse come in an' I couldn't make my get-away, so I hid in the draughtin' room closet. I was tryin' to git out when he caught me.

MORTON. So you're the guilty party.

TOMMY. Guilty, yer honor.

MORTON. And you poured the ink on that drawing, too?

TOMMY. That drawing? No—no, I ——

MORTON. What's that ink on your fingers?

TOMMY. That's been there all the morning. (*He looks guiltily at JERRY.*) I got that on there when I—when I—aw, what's the use? (*He is speaking chiefly to JERRY.*) I was tryin' to put that over on you, too. I done it.

JERRY. I know it.

TOMMY. How'd you know it?

MORTON (*to JERRY*). You told me that you didn't know who did it.

JERRY. I didn't then. I found out when I bandaged his wrist. There's a funny scar on his thumb, where the ink stain is. You'll see the mark of it on the drawing.

(*MORTON examines the drawing, which is on the desk, down L.*)

MORTON. You're right!

TOMMY. If you knew why didn't you tell on me?

JERRY. I'm no tattle-tale.

TOMMY. Say—you're—you're different from what I thought you were. I wouldn't have tried—what I did—if I'd known.

JERRY. Oh, that's all right.

TOMMY. Where'd you learn the Red Cross stuff?

JERRY. It's part of the Boy Scout training.

TOMMY. Are you a Boy Scout?

(*HAMILTON comes down L.*)

JERRY. Yes. I'm a Scout. They teach you lots of things—first aid and athletics and how to live in the woods and wireless and—and how to live right—straight, I mean.

TOMMY. Gee! I wish I'd had a chance like that. I've had kinder hard luck. It's the gang I travel with, I guess. They're a cheap crowd, but I was brought up with 'em.

JERRY. Why don't you join the Scouts?

TOMMY (*eagerly*). Could I?

JERRY. Sure. I'll get you in. Will you join?

TOMMY. Would they take a—a roughneck like me?

JERRY. Of course they'd take you.

TOMMY. I'd like to join.

JERRY. Good.

TOMMY. Say—you're all right!

MORTON. Tommy, I fired you because you weren't worth a dollar a year to me. But if the Boy Scouts or the Salvation Army or any other human agency can make a decent sort of boy out of you I'll get you a good job. What do you say?

TOMMY (*up c.*). You're on!

MORTON (*down l.*). Consider yourself on probation for a few weeks and come around occasionally and report to me. I'll help you if you mean business. Now go down to the Relief Hospital and have that arm dressed.

TOMMY. Yes, sir.

JERRY. I'll go with you.

TOMMY. No. I'd rather go alone. That cut ain't anything. I can stand on me own feet. (*He goes to door c. There he stops.*) Don't forget about the Scouts.

JERRY (*R. c.*). No, I'll let you know.

(*TOMMY opens the door, then turns again. Hesitatingly he comes back and holds out his uninjured hand to JERRY. The boys shake hands. TOMMY goes out. JERRY waits a second or two, then starts to follow.*)

MORTON. Where are you going?

JERRY. You said I was fired.

MORTON. Fired! No, I need you.

JERRY. I'm not ——

MORTON. Not by a long shot. Sweep up that glass.

(JERRY starts to work with enthusiasm as the curtain falls.)

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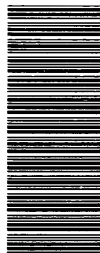
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